

Welcome home, *Discovery*



NASA STS114-SC48



NASA/Martovitz JSC2005E3434

Space Shuttle Discovery glided to a gentle touchdown at Edwards Air Force Base in California at 7:11 a.m. CDT on Aug. 9. Weather concerns earlier that morning had caused the 'wave off' of two Kennedy Space Center landing opportunities. Commander Eileen Collins and Pilot Jim Kelly guided the ship as it made its 17,000 mph descent from space into the morning darkness.

The STS-114 crew (left) watches from the podium during the crew return ceremony that took place at Ellington Field as JSC Center Director Jefferson D. Howell Jr. makes introductory remarks.

Space Center Roundup

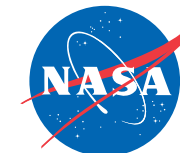
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Discovery comes full circle

On Day Three of the historic Return to Flight mission, *Discovery* Commander Eileen Collins guided the spacecraft through a backflip to allow photography of its heat shield. The photos were analyzed by engineers on the ground as additional data to evaluate the condition of *Discovery's* heat-resistant ceramic tiles.

Explore. Discover. Understand.

September
2005
Houston, Texas

Beak sends...

A MESSAGE FROM CENTER DIRECTOR LT. GEN. JEFFERSON D. HOWELL JR.

“The eyes of the world...”

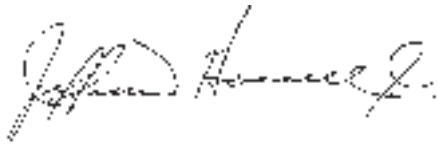
I hope my Aggie colleagues will forgive this small story. In the early 1900s the President of the University of Texas (UT), Col. William Prather, regularly reminded the then small student body of the university that “The eyes of Texas are upon you!” The colonel was altering a similar saying used by Robert E. Lee when Prather was a student at Washington College in Lexington, Va. He was trying to impress upon the students that being the few sons and daughters of the state attending UT, all of Texas was watching to see if they would succeed or squander their unique opportunity. His continual extolling about “The eyes of Texas are upon you!” led to the present familiar school song.

Last July millions of people around the world held their collective breath as *Discovery* roared into orbit, and again when it descended back to Mother Earth. The countless number of front-page articles in newspapers from all nations affirmed the incredible attention this mission and we, NASA, were attracting worldwide. The STS-114 experience should serve as a reminder to all of us that we and what we do, including our successes and failures, serve as a significant measuring stick to the rest of the world as to the greatness of our nation. Appropriate or not, that’s the way it is. Indeed, “The eyes of the world are upon you!”

The crews flying in our spacecraft are rightfully the focal point of attention. However, when things go wrong, you and I get much of the spotlight when the “fault mongers” go on the attack. One might think it’s not fair to be sliced and diced when the blame game gets under way. On the contrary, I believe the attention and criticism we receive is a sign of the extraordinary importance that our activities are perceived by all others.

Mistakes will always be made in any human enterprise, especially one as complex and difficult as human space exploration. However, if we strive to eliminate error to the best of our ability, and we continuously pursue mission success while maintaining our integrity and practicing professional excellence, we can face our critics with our heads held high.

How very special it is to be a part of this wonderful endeavor that has so much importance to our nation and the world! I have every confidence that you will excel as we go forward to fulfill the Vision for Space Exploration.



Jefferson D. Howell Jr. speaks at the crew return celebration held at Ellington Air Force Base.

NASA/Sanchez JSC2005E33499

a letter

FROM THE STS - 114 CREW

To the NASA family:

The entire STS-114 crew is happy to be back on Earth and back in Houston among our family and friends.

Our mission success was in large part due to the efforts of everyone here on the ground, at JSC and all the other NASA centers. We were well trained and prepared for the flight. *Discovery* performed up to every expectation and then some. We thank you for everything you did to get us ready and for the sacrifices you made over the past two-and-one-half years as NASA returned its Shuttle fleet to space.

It was a very special feeling as a Shuttle approached the International Space Station for the first time since *Endeavour's* visit in November 2002. Sergei Krikalev and John Phillips were gracious hosts and worked diligently as we transferred equipment and supplies and enhanced the Station's operational fitness. *Discovery* set the stage for the missions that will follow as we complete construction of this great facility in space!

The Space Shuttle is a fabulous flying machine, and it has played an important role as we continue to explore space. In the next few years, even as Shuttles continue their valuable work in space, we will begin building the next-generation spacecraft to replace it. The Space Shuttle will always have a special place in our hearts. We are confident that the same talented people who build, maintain and manage the Space Shuttle and Space Station will be the ones who take us back to the Moon and on to Mars.

My entire crew was honored to fly this mission and represent NASA to America and the world. We know none of it would have been possible without you. You should be proud of the work you've done and continue to do for America's space program.

We are thankful for your hard work and dedication.

- Eileen Collins, Commander
- James Kelly, Pilot
- Charlie Camarda, Mission Specialist
- Wendy Lawrence, Mission Specialist
- Steve Robinson, Mission Specialist
- Andy Thomas, Mission Specialist
- Soichi Noguchi, Mission Specialist, JAXA



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